

IN FOCUS

The Official Publication
of the Jamaican
Canadian Association

November 1997

SERVING THE BLACK AND CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY FOR OVER 35 YEARS

Date set for appeal

By Billroy Powell

The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) has set Monday and Tuesday, the 24th and 25th of November, 1997 to argue an appeal made by Mr. Santo Peluso against the City of North York's approval of the Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA) rezoning application.

Earlier this year, the JCA submitted an application to the City of North York for rezoning of its property at 995 Arrow Road to accommodate a community centre. After submission of the application, the North York Planning Committee informed the JCA that the property did not have adequate parking space for the intended purpose of the property. Consequently, the JCA negotiated with two of its neighbours and obtained the additional parking spaces as per the Committee's requirements.

As procedure dictates, the City of



Current JCA Board of Directors (Left to Right) Francella Moore, Barbara Thomas, Uriel Soares, Hector Grey, Pauline Tomlinson, Alton Telfer, Herman Stewart and Patricia Williams.

North York publicly displayed a sign on the Property to inform JCA's neighbours of the JCA's intent and purpose. Subsequently, some of the neighbours engaged themselves in petitioning others to object to the JCA's presence in the Neighbourhood. A list containing 11 names and letters were submitted to the North York Planning Committee expressing disapproval of the JCA's presence in the neighbourhood. Notwithstanding, the Planning Committee approved the application because the JCA met the stipulated requirements.

Mr. Peluso, our immediate neighbour, dissatisfied with the Planning Committee's decision,

continue to object to the JCA's application. He insisted that the JCA did not meet the parking requirements. The matter went before City Council for final approval in May 1997 and again Mr. Peluso continues to oppose the JCA. North York City Council voted 13 in favour and one opposed to approve the application despite Mr. Peluso's effort to frustrate the JCA and the process. *Continued on page 3*

IMPORTANT: PLEASE ATTEND

QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, Nov. 30, 1997

2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

JCA Centre

995 Arrow Road

(416) 746-5772

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Youth...chart your course!

by Neil Armstrong

In the run up to the elections, it is heartening to know that several young people are running for the position of councillor and school board trustee.

Michael Marson, Arlanna Lewis, Natalie Wall, Jeanelle Julien and Nickesha Hudson are members of a group called Community P.O.W.E.R (People Organized Working for Equal Rights).

Michael Marson was one of the candidates who participated in the councillors' debate held by the Jamaican Canadian Association recently. Three days after the JCA's debate, the Toronto Star's editorial mentioned that Michael Marson should be given a

chance. The Star supports Judy Sgro, but thinks George Mammoliti should go because of his fight against the Jamaican Canadian Association Centre, among other things. Both these councillors were also participants at the JCA debate.

Having arranged interviews with the youth running for megacity positions for broadcast on CHRY 105.5FM, I have been impressed with their campaign message. There is a message of anti-racism programs, SIU accountability, prison rehabilitation programs, culturally enriched curricula and mentoring programs. All the members of Community P.O.W.E.R plan to donate a part of their salary to the communities they will serve, if elected. I wish them the best in their political endeavour to affect change in society.

Discovering their roots

Tyler Lewis a candidate for North York Council, is one of four students whose essays were selected by the Jane-Finch Concerned Citizens Organization (JFCCO) to go on an educational, cultural and business tour of Ghana in the late summer of this year. He is now attending Queens University where he is pursuing studies in economics. Shauna King, Charmaine Purville and Keisha Morgan were the other students. They all came back invigorated with a strong sense of their African heritage. Heather Greenwood, a Black journalist from the Toronto Star, who is now studying at the Faculty of Law, University of Windsor went with them. Her reports published in the Star told us

ATTENTION!!!

**Notice is hereby given
that there will be a
motion to amend the
JCA's constitution at the
next regular meeting
scheduled for
November 30, 1997.**

how emotional and educational the trip was for these young people. Before they left for Ghana, I had asked each of them about what they would do with the knowledge gained there. They all replied "We'll share what we learnt with students, our friends and family." They are back and can be a source to tap into for first-hand knowledge of places like Elmina Castle and Accra.

250 Youth Attend Conference

On November 1, 1997, I attended a Black Youth in Business Conference organized by the Black Enterprise Network. There were over 250 Black youth who attended to learn about entrepreneurship. The turn out was good, the participants enthusiastic and the workshops well planned. My only critique of the conference was that, there was too much information given in the one-hour workshops, and I thought there could have been more Black professionals involved. I mentioned this to one of the organizers, Janet Neilson and she told me that she tried to get more Black professionals involved, but they wouldn't return calls.

**Give to
the JCA
building fund!**

President's Report

by Herman Stewart

As you can see from our cover story, the appeal against our rezoning will be heard at the Ontario Municipal Board on November 24 and 25. We are confident that our rezoning will be upheld.

Tax Exemption

Both North York and Metro Councils have approved our request for cancellation of our property taxes which is currently \$36,000 per year. The next step in the process is for Queen's Park to give final approval. A Private Members's Bill will be introduced when the Legislature reconvenes in late November. If the bill passes, our tax cancellation will be retroactive to January 1997.

Corporate Fundraising

Ten corporations have been approached so far for donations. Another 10 will be approached as soon as the United Way Campaign is concluded in November. In the meantime, the Committee is sending requests for donations to prominent members of our community. It is hoped that at least 500 members of our community will pledge \$1.00 per day for 3 years.

Advocacy

After one and a half years of trying, we finally had a meeting with the Solicitor General where we had a good discussion on the issue of policing. The Solicitor General has since appointed Judge George Adams to consult on the issue of police co-operation with the SIU.

We hosted an all candidates debate during the recently-concluded municipal elections at the JCA centre, so as to give our community a voice in how the Megacity will be defined.



Members of the JCA Education Committee

We have sent letters to the Prime Minister and several Cabinet Ministers urging them to support Milestone's bid for a radio station licence.

Task Force

The recommendations of the Task Force will be discussed at a two-day retreat November 15-16. We will be putting forward a package of recommendations at the membership meeting on Sunday, November 30th.

Now that our rezoning problem is over, I am appealing to all our members and friends of the JCA to please help our community by making a donation. It does not matter whether it's \$1.00 or \$100. It's our centre and we should all be proud. Show your pride by making a donation today.

Part of our preparation for our retreat is to have a "rap session" with our young people on November 1 concerning JCA programs and activities they would like to see us engaged in. We are also hoping that from this session we will be able to find two youth representatives to attend our retreat.

I look forward to seeing you at our quarterly meeting.

Appeal

continued from page 1

The opposing vote on the Council was that of the local councillor, George Mammoliti and he warned the JCA that even if Council approve the application, the issue would be taken up with the OMB and the process could be a lengthy and drawn out one.

The threat was executed, Mr. Peluso made an appeal to the OMB and the hearing dates are now set. Both Mr. Peluso and Mr. Mammoliti underestimated the JCA's ability to get things done. The hearing is now scheduled and is done in a time frame shorter than anyone anticipated.

The JCA is confident that the OMB will rule in its favour by throwing out the appeal on the grounds that it is frivolous. After all, the JCA has met all the requirements stipulated by North York City Council in accordance with the City's rezoning bylaw.

**The Jamaican
Canadian
Association**
35 Years of service and
commitment

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Letters and submissions welcome.
The Editorial Committee reserves
the right to edit materials for length.

Know your centre

by Uriel Soares, Building Committee Chair

Did you know that your community centre, at 995 Arrow Road, has a total area of about 24,000 sq. ft. including the small upstairs portion of about 2,500 sq. ft? This is 12 times the size of a 2,000 sq. ft. house; no wonder the property taxes is \$36,000 per year.

The small upstairs portion is occupied by two different tenants. A third tenant on the ground floor occupies another 1,500 sq. ft. at the north west corner of the building. All three tenants were inherited with the building.

Of the 20,000 sq. ft. currently used by the JCA, approximately 18,000 sq. ft. need to be renovated. The renovations will include additional office space and meeting rooms, two computer rooms, a large members lounge with pool table, two large community club/recreation rooms. There will be a state-of-the-art commercial kitchen to cater to the full capacity of the centre. There will also be portable facilities for netball, basketball and table tennis to encourage youth participation.

Architectural and engineering drawings are now at the permit stage i.e. they are at the stage where a building permit could be applied for within weeks.

The building permit is estimated to cost about \$4,500.00 and the renovations close to \$750,000.00. Work would take 6-8 months to complete.

To minimize construction cost, we will encourage prospective contractors and subcontractors to include some volunteer labour in their bids where possible. Other groups in the GTA have done so successfully. This could be ap-

plied in areas such as demolition, cleaning up, framing and dry wall installation, digging, plumbing, painting, floor tiling, welding and even electrical installation. We are aiming to reduce costs by 10% or more by this method when ever it can be applied in a safe and timely manner.

As your Building Chair, I am asking for your suggestions and ideas regarding cost reduction. The JCA extends a cordial invitation to anyone who has not visited the Centre to drop in during working hours or during a special event to view the architectural plan and tour the building. I can assure you that you'll experience the thrill of a lifetime accompanied by a great feeling of pride and satisfaction as you enter the huge and spacious centre; so see you soon.

**JOIN
THE
JCA
TODAY!!**

**FOR COMMUNITY
FOR YOURSELF**

**CALL
(416) 746-5772**

JCA links with centre

by Daphne Bailey

Through the Family Advisory Committee, the Jamaican Canadian Association is linked with North York Seniors' Health Centre. The Committee consists of members from four communities, namely the Ismaili, Armenian, Spanish, and Black/Caribbean, plus staff from the Seniors' Health Centre. Each community is allotted 10 beds for seniors who require heavy nursing care.

The Advisory Committee meets the 4th Monday of every month. The Committee is in the process of expanding its membership to include family members from the health centre. The first meeting will take place on the 5th of November. The rationale is, that all clients in the centre will be represented and at the same time focusing on the four target communities. This would also provide an opportunity for family members to give advice and feedback to the seniors' Health Centre staff on issues relating to residents programming and quality of life.

Recently, members of the committee and staff of the centre hosted a cultural night. JCA was well represented and the evening was a huge success. Needless to say our food was a big hit. We even had one young boy who returned again and again to fill his plate with goodies.

Kudos to Winnifred Green in her new Vocation as she was a crowd pleaser with her interpretation of Harry Belafonte's Island in the Sun in the form of an interpretive dance.

Volunteers are needed to visit the residents at the Health Centre; so if anyone has the time and energy, your involvement would be appreciated. Please contact Lauren Simpson at the Health Centre at 756-1040 ext 8014.

Membership Committee Report

by Francella Moore

The Membership Committee has been very busy over the past months. September was declared membership month by the JCA Membership Committee. We have recruited 60 new members during the month. Because of this success, we are extending our membership drive to the end of October. We implore you to encourage a family member, a friend or co-worker to join the JCA.

Membership Appreciation

The membership appreciation evening which took place on Saturday, October 4, 1997 was very successful. There were over 130 members present. The comments received were encouraging. We are planning to have another one on Saturday, November 22, 1997, from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. We will have dominos, bingo etc., so come out and enjoy the fun with us.

Visitation Group

The visitation group is asking that you advise them if you have a family member or if you know of a member of the JCA who would benefit from its visits.

Membership Renewal

If you have not yet renewed your membership, you can do so by sending in your fee. We need your support. Also, if you have changed your address and/or phone number, please advise us so that we can update our files.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sunlight Bakery and all the people who gave donations and their time toward our events.

Social Committee Report

by Barbara Thomas

Sad to say summer is gone, and it is time to start pulling out those heavy coats and boots. I do hope you all had a wonderful summer.

Our summer activities were successful. This year's flag Raising Ceremony was a very special one. We included a prayer in commemoration of the emancipation of our people, since it is intrinsically linked to Jamaica's Independence (Full emancipation to Independence 1838 - 1962). Jamaica's new Counsel General, Mr. Herman LaMont, to Toronto was introduced replacing Mrs. Margarietta St. Juste whose term of office expired July 31, 1997.

The Thanksgiving Service and Emancipation Commemoration was held at St. Pauls Anglican Church, 227 Bloor St. Quest speaker Dr. Vassel Kerr of the Ontario Conference of Seventh Day Adventist brought an inspirational message. The Independence Dinner was held at the Ramada Hotel 400/401. Over 200 members and friends of JCA were in attendance. The guest speaker was Mr. Alvin Curling, M.P.P., Scarborough North. Our Emcee was Mr. Allan Jones of Jones and Jones Productions with entertainers Candace Veacock and Wayne Tennant. Music was provided by Sugar Bird International.

Although I was not present at this function, I understand everyone had a wonderful evening. A special thank you for your support and assistance, Candace, Allan and Wayne, We look for-

ward to your continued support. I personally want to thank the Committee for their unending support and for taking full responsibility in my absence.

The Committee wishes to thank all the donors for their donations and all who have supported us through good and bad times.

An important concern was raised by one of our dedicated members of the Association. The fact that a "single person" is charged a higher fee, than that charged to "couples" for attendance to JCA events. The board has decided that this practice will stop, and that there will be a "one price" policy for adults.

I would also like to inform you, that due to "financial constraints" there will be no New Year's Eve function this year. As we approach the beginning of another year, the members of the Social Committee wish you as usual, A safe winter, a warm and Merry Christmas and the best for 1998.

"Love can never be found inside of a fist!"

The JCA Violence Against Women Program

Services are free and confidential.
Immediate appointments.

Contact:
Rita McLean (416) 746-5772

JCA / CYFS: A fountain of experience

by Vira Steward

There are six students completing their placements at CYFS and JCA; two are Social Service Worker students from Centennial College, two are Correctional Worker students also from Centennial, one Social Worker student from Ryerson Polytechnic Institute and one co-op student from Runnymede Collegiate Institute. They are Trecia Lamey, Natasha Trotman, Nicola Reid, Carol Savage, Devi Singh and Caren Beane. How do they feel about being placement students at JCA/CYFS? Here's what they said.

"I felt welcomed since the first day I came. The staff are all very friendly and they helped me to fit in right away. I have had many chances to gain a lot of valuable experience in the schools and in the community. I feel CYFS is the place to get the most valu-

able experiences with the ethnic community, and to get a good challenge."

Natasha Trotman

"Being a Placement student at JCA/CYFS offers me the opportunity to attend workshops, participate in office duties and work one-on-one with clients. These experiences will be valuable in my future career."

Trecia Lamey

"Being a placement student at JCA/CYFS has been interesting in the past few weeks because, I get to meet interesting people like the mayor and the chief of police. I was able to attend the debate downtown at Queens Park and it was very interesting. As for the

counselling aspect, it's great because I get to interact with clients on a one-on-one basis. I'm also involved in the staff meetings, they make me feel welcomed."

Nicola Reid

"As part of my placement at CYFS, I have been working at the Shoreham Public School with the H.E.L.P program. So far I have enjoyed the work I have done at the Shoreham School as it allows me to work one-on-one with children and to work as part of a team. I am also looking forward to working with clients at the CYFS office"

Caren Beane

"Being a placement student at JCA/CYFS is great. I'm being exposed to the jail system and I'm getting experience working with the inmates from the Black community."

REMINDER

Keep your membership dues current. Dues are still \$20 per individual, \$30 per family. To find out more about the JCA and member activities call (416) 746-5772

Caribbean Youth and Family Services has implemented a Life Skills group for adolescent females at Oakdale Park Middle School. This year's group is co-facilitated by Natasha Trotman, a student with Centennial College's Social Service Worker program and myself. We are very pleased and excited to be able to support the students in their academic development. We are confident that we will achieve our goal which is to help them develop and enrich their skills in many areas including communication and conflict resolution. Further, we aim to build their self-esteem which is significant in promoting success in their future endeavour.

opportunity to enrich ourselves and support others.

We currently have a waiting list of "little Pal", primarily young males; as interest in the program is constant, our list is sure to grow. Thus, we are actively seeking adult volunteers who are interested in working with children and wish to contribute to their community. If you are interested and or know someone who may be, please contact me for more information.

Reaching the community

by Allyson Collymore

The Pal Program is reflective of JCA's commitment to youth and children of African heritage and their families. This youth mentoring program is designed to match adults with children between the ages of 7-16 years old to support their academic, social and cultural needs. The program is one of the many significant ways JCA provides our community the

Violence against women is wrong!!

by Rita Mclean

When a woman is abused by a man, she usually gets blamed for what happened to her. The abuser often justifies his behaviour with excuses, such as he was provoked, pressures at work or that he was drunk. These things do not legitimize violence and are not excuses for assault.

In Canada, domestic violence causes more injury to women than car accidents. Domestic violence is the cause for the majority of women admitted to hospital, according to a Statistics Canada's report published in 1993.

Within the Caribbean community, violence in the household is a common practice. This may be culturally motivated, because in some islands men see it as a God-given right to keep the women in check. In addition to this misconception is the fact that many Caribbean women accept beatings at the hands of their partners

as a norm. They do not realize that not only do their partners have no right to hit them, but that it is a criminal offence.

While men and women view abuse differently, some men think certain forms of physical abuse, like a push or shove, are not really abuse, but they are most definitely forms of intimidation to induce fear into women and silence them.

Domestic violence is not limited to body injury. Abuse includes emotional and verbal abuse as well. The so-called harmless abuses such as name calling and browbeating are also attacks on women self-esteem and their confidence.

A relationship where domestic violence exists is based on power and control. Most women who

have been abused are financially dependent on their mate. Domestic violence is not acceptable under any circumstances. It is never the fault or responsibility of any victim of abuse. Such responsibility rests solely with the abuser.

The cycle of domestic violence continues in our society because the justice system fails to protect women and reinforces the abuser's values and misconception. All of us who work in this field are aware that men get away with their violent behaviour both at home and in courts. They are not consistently held accountable for their actions.

Just a reminder, domestic violence is everybody's business to stop. The place to start is in your own home.

Jail program update

by Carlean Morgan

I currently run three programs with two correctional institutions. Metropolitan Toronto West Detention (Young Offenders Unit and the female Unit), and Toronto Don Jail (adult male population).

This program provides the inmates with: Therapeutic and life skills group counselling; Anger Management, Conflict Resolution, and Aftercare resources and referrals.

The inmates rights have been violated on a number of occasions. I have been accumulating the information and

documenting their concerns and incidents that have happened over the past year. The information that I have accumulated will be identified in a up coming seminar that I am currently organizing. Stay tuned for further information in the next infocus. Here is a little note that I would like to leave with you:

There is so much good in the worst of us. So much bad in the best of us. That it ill behooves any of us. To find fault with the rest of us.

Caribbean- Canadian Seniors

995 Arrow Road
Tues. & Thurs.
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Our activities Include:
arts and crafts, choral group,
discussions, seminars and
field trips.

Come and meet people who
will treat you like family
and a friend!!

For more information,
call us at

(416) 746-5772



JCA seniors enjoying a sumptuous meal

JCA Art Fest '97

by Frank Wallace

Investment

by Vira Stewart

The Caribbean Youth and Family Services have joined forces with Shoreham Public School to invest in the future of our children by implementing a program to assist those students who are struggling to attend school successfully. The program will seek to address the needs of children who are experiencing difficulties adjusting to regular classroom expectation. These students will be engaged in individual counselling and

be given support within the classroom as well.

Students utilizing the program have been recommended by teachers who feel they would benefit from our involvement. These students are from Afro., Caribbean and Canadian background.

We have invested a large amount in the future of our community. We look forward to the dividends that we will all reap.

Staff profile: Vira Stewart

I am the new Program Supervisor for the JCA's Caribbean Youth and Family Services. I am delighted to be apart of this prestigious staff team at JCA. At this point, you may be interested in where I'm from and what qualification I bring to the agency. I bring with me fifteen years of experience in the social service field, and ten of these years as management. I am educated in the field of Psychology with a minor in Black History.

I would like to flaunt my most outstanding credential. I am a wife and a mother of three children; two daughters and a son. Nothing can educate you like life itself. I am very much a people person as you will quickly see due to my open door policy with staff.

The best view of me is face to face with my warmth, charm, humour, and polished diplomacy. Note; I am not very good talking about me.

The idea of the arts show and sale as a special event to supplement the JCA fundraising activities did almost exactly what could be expected in terms of its initial presentation and objectivity as an annual event. However, due to low attendance caused by weather plus other community activities the fund-raising was minimal.

The show itself was excellent in terms of the styles, techniques of David Kbuuklin and Macaulay Eteli, Carol Finn, Jane Theodore, Winston Berrott and Eden Franklin and Seitu. From the artistic standpoint, Genesis 11 did what was expected. Artistic expression naturally enhances self esteem and group esteem and gives rise to self expression. It is the only free and available means of communication left to humanity which invites a feeling of respect for different cultures.

Art promotes culture by means of the human spirit. Art can also be used for promoting racial equality. Speaking of culture, the food specially provided was delicious, especially the "festival" dumplings. The background music presented enhanced the occasion, especially the song by Curtis Mayfield, which says, "Let's do it again!"

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35 Years of service
& commitment